

## Excerpt from “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

Read the excerpt and complete the activity that follows.

### Chapter 8

# The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

(Adapted from the story by Washington Irving)

#### THE BIG QUESTION

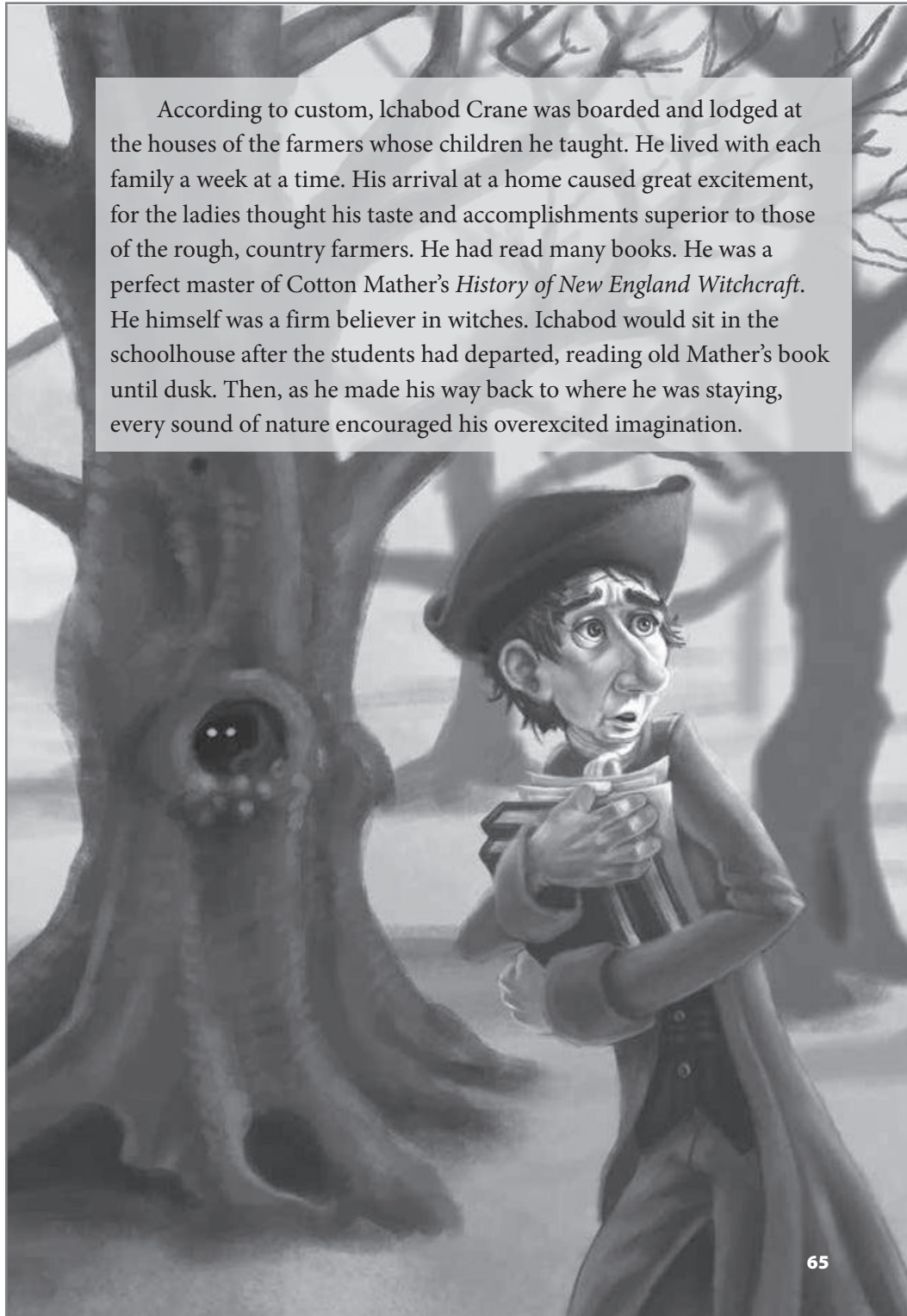
Why do people believe a headless horseman haunts the village of Sleepy Hollow?

Not far from the eastern shore of the Hudson River is a little valley known as Sleepy Hollow. A drowsy, dreamy atmosphere hangs over the valley, as if it were under the sway of some **bewitching** power. The valley **abounds** with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions. But the dominant spirit that haunts the region is the sight of a ghostly figure on horseback without a head. It is said to be the spirit of a Hessian soldier, whose head was carried away by a cannonball during the Revolutionary War. The ghost is said to ride out nightly to the scene of the battle in search of his head, and to return to the churchyard before daybreak.

In this out-of-the-way place there lived a teacher by the name of Ichabod Crane. His name was well-suited to him. He was tall and very lanky, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, and hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves. He had huge ears, large green eyes, and a long nose. To see him striding along on a windy day, with his clothes fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for a scarecrow.

From his schoolhouse, his pupils could be heard reciting their lessons. They were occasionally interrupted by the voice of the master or by the sound of his **switch**.

According to custom, Ichabod Crane was boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he taught. He lived with each family a week at a time. His arrival at a home caused great excitement, for the ladies thought his taste and accomplishments superior to those of the rough, country farmers. He had read many books. He was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's *History of New England Witchcraft*. He himself was a firm believer in witches. Ichabod would sit in the schoolhouse after the students had departed, reading old Mather's book until dusk. Then, as he made his way back to where he was staying, every sound of nature encouraged his overexcited imagination.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

He loved to pass long winter evenings with the farmers' wives as they sat spinning by the fire. He listened with interest to their tales of ghosts and goblins—and of the headless horseman. But the cost of the pleasure in all this was the terror of his walk home. What fearful shapes and shadows jumped across his path! How often did he



**dread** to look over his shoulder, for fear of catching a glimpse of some ghostly being close behind him!

Katrina Van Tassel, the only child of a rich farmer, found favor in Ichabod's eyes—not merely for her beauty

but for her vast inheritance. Her father was a thriving farmer, and his barn was filled with the fruits of his labor. Sleek porkers grunted in their pens. Regiments of turkeys went gobbling through the farmyard. The teacher's mouth watered as he pictured every pig roasted with an apple in its mouth and every turkey wearing a necklace of savory sausages. As he cast his eyes upon the trees **laden** with fruit, and considered the obvious wealth that surrounded him, he became determined to win the affections of the farmer's daughter.

However, he was not the only **suitor**. The most **formidable** of all was a local hero known as Brom Bones. He was a **burly** young fellow, famous for his horsemanship and always ready for a fight or some fun. Whenever a crazy prank occurred in the neighborhood, people whispered that Brom Bones must be at the bottom of it.

The following words were used in “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.” For each word, pick an activity and complete the chart below.

bewitching	<p><b>Vocabulary Activities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Type a definition in your own words.</li> <li>2. Provide a synonym (similar meaning).</li> <li>3. Provide an antonym (opposite meaning).</li> <li>4. Use the word in a sentence.</li> <li>5. Provide another word that the word makes you think of and explain why. (<i>Apple</i> makes me think of bananas because they are both fruits.)</li> <li>6. Think of an example of the word and type about it. (An example of <i>fruit</i> is cantaloupe. It is a melon that is white on the outside and orange on the inside. They are really tasty in the summer.)</li> </ol>
abound	
laden	
suitor	
formidable	
burly	

Word	Activity	Activity Response